Tourism, Culture and Recreation
Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs
March 4, 2008

Provincial Government Focuses on Cultural Tourism

Workshops being held in Corner Brook and St. John's this week will focus on the emerging opportunities in Newfoundland and Labrador to develop closer links between the province's rich culture and the growing tourism industry.

The Honourable Clyde Jackman, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation, said the purpose of the workshops is to gather input from invited participants with a view to developing a provincial cultural tourism plan.

"We must capitalize on the fact that we know visitors are coming here to experience both our natural attractions and our unique culture and heritage," Minister Jackman said. "Cultural tourism is among the fast-growing segments of the tourism industry. In order to meet this market demand, we must always be looking to develop new, more diverse tourism experiences which appeal to travellers."

Officials from the Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation will be meeting with key stakeholders from throughout the province today, March 4, in Corner Brook and in St. John's on March 6. A third workshop will be held in Labrador in the spring.

Among the topics to be discussed during the workshops is the opportunity to develop a cultural tourism industry within Aboriginal communities in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Honourable Patty Pottle, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, said that Aboriginal people in Newfoundland and Labrador have long participated in, and celebrated, cultural customs within their communities.

"The Aboriginal people of Newfoundland and Labrador have made a tremendous contribution to this province's cultural heritage and continue to do so," Minister Pottle said. "We understand the need to connect with the past and, with careful development over the long term, Aboriginal participation in this area could help boost economies and preserve cultural traditions."

The Provincial Government's $17.6 million cultural strategy, *Creative Newfoundland and Labrador: The Blueprint for Development and Investment in Culture,* specifically commits to developing strategies to encourage and promote cultural tourism and attract visitors interested in the heritage and culture of our province. The strategy also notes the importance of this province's indigenous and ethnic cultures in the realization of that goal.

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